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BY THE WAY

There will likely be a variety of opinions about the new fair and rodeo facilities at the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center as this week's Umatilla County Fair and Farm-City Pro Rodeo are hosted for the first time at their new home. But an early review was offered Monday by T.J. Korkow of Korkow Rodeos, one of the stock contractors providing livestock for the rough stock events. "I think it's awesome," Korkow said of the new arena and stock pens behind the rodeo arena where his bulls and bucking horses will spend then week. Korkow and his livestock were unloading at the new arena Monday afternoon.

Hermiston High School senior Dayshawn Neal was featured last week in the Oregonian's sports staff's list of the top 50 football players to watch in the 2017 season. The Oregonian list said the Bulldogs receiver is likely to top 1,000 yards this season, after 51 receptions, 911 yards and 12 touchdowns as a junior. The Bulldogs are scheduled to open the season on the road for a non-conference game on Friday, Sept. 1, against Union High School of Vancouver, Washington. We are just over three weeks away from the season opener.

Umatilla High School brought home a couple of awards from the Technology Student Association's national conference, held June

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MORE SPACE BIGGER FAIR

Fair first day full of adjustments, excitement

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
STAFF WRITER

During opening day of the Umatilla County Fair, vendors and participants were busy getting used to a lot of new things — and preparing for the big crowds to come.

Most people noted that the biggest change this year is the size of the venue.

"It's a bigger footprint up here," said Mary Corp, regional administrator for the OSU Extension Service, who oversees 4-H entries for the fair. "People should wear good walking shoes and maybe split it up into a couple of visits."

Many of the fair logistics will be different this year too, such as parking. There are several lots around the EOTEC grounds, and a daily parking pass costs \$5. A season fair parking pass, valid for the entire week, is \$20. Passes can be purchased from parking lot attendants and must be paid for in cash.

Because the grounds are so large, "people movers," or small trolleys towed by tractors, will be circling the grounds all week, taking people from the more distant parking lots up to the fair entrance.

On Friday and Saturday, Mid-Columbia Bus Company will provide a free shuttle service between the fairgrounds and four locations in Hermiston: the Hermiston Chamber of Commerce parking lot, Hermiston City Hall parking lot, the Walmart parking lot near McDonald's, and at Hermiston High School parking lot near Weber Field. The shuttle will run from 2 to 10 p.m.

In the animal barns, many said they were getting used to the space.

"Once all the kinks are worked out, it's going to be absolutely wonderful," said Alice Dyer, superintendent of small animals for the fair. Dyer said the students show their animals on Wednesday and Thursday, but the first couple of days are busy for another reason.

"We individually vet-check every single animal," Dyer said.

Leah Smith, the FFA advisor at Hermiston High School, said her students have had to make some adjustments to the new venue.

"They're mostly positive adjustments," she said. "We don't have to pen our animals together as much anymore."

She said the students don't have as much space to store their own things, which is a challenge.

"We're definitely at a loss for tack space," she said. "We will need to adjust that next year. And parking, there's maybe been some frustration. But the facilities are beautiful, and next year, it's going to be spot-on."

Law enforcement will have their hands full this year, as well.

"It's just so much bigger," said Umatilla County Sheriff Terry Rowan. "We need to be very fluid this week. As the week progresses, we will likely find some wrinkles that we need

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ABOVE, Hermiston Mayor Dave Drotzmann walks around one of the livestock barns at the Umatilla County Fair on Monday in Hermiston.

STAFF PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS

'It's a bigger footprint up here. People should wear good walking shoes and maybe split it up into a couple of visits.'

Mary Corp, regional administrator for the OSU Extension Service



STAFF PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS

Echo FFA members junior Bobbie Sharp, top left, gets a hand from junior Kaylee Murstig, second from bottom left, and junior Lexie Cox, top right, while decorating their goat pens on Monday at the Umatilla County Fair in Hermiston.

New grounds opened

Work done, ribbon cut, fair begins

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
STAFF WRITER

About 100 people crowded into the foyer at the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center main building Monday evening, hours from the start of the facility's biggest event to date.

On the eve of the 105th Umatilla County Fair, backers of EOTEC and community members cut the ribbon on the facility and cheered the efforts it's

taken to get to this point.

It was a culmination of years of planning and work and many expressed relief that the roughly \$16 million project was finally coming to fruition.

"If you're like me, you were nervous up until today," said Hermiston Mayor David Drotzmann. "There was a lot of anxiety and nervousness that things wouldn't get done. But I'm excited and proud to be here."

Drotzmann, along with City Manager Byron Smith and Umatilla County Commissioner Larry Givens, both members of the EOTEC board, talked about

the work it's taken to get the facility up and running.

"In 2012, we had just signed away the Umatilla County Fairgrounds," Givens said. "I was more than scared. I thought, was this an absolute disaster? But people have pitched in. I went down to the old fairgrounds last Saturday, and thought, how did we manage to survive in that spot?"

Smith said it was exciting to see the place finally fill up with vendors.

"There have been lots of bumps," Smith said. "But nothing we couldn't overcome."

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